

II. RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Claims 1-16 are pending in this application.

Claims 17-27 have been withdrawn.

Claims 9 and 10 were objected to for containing grammatical informalities. Applicant has amended these claims in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, and therefore requests that the objection to these claims be removed.

Claims 19-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Guet al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,390,747).

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(1) as being unpatentable over Richardson (U.S. Patent No. 4,545,017) ("the '017 patent"). Claims 1-3 have been cancelled, and therefore Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn as moot.

Claims 4-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(1) as being unpatentable over the '017 patent in view of Johnson (U.S. Publication No. 2001/0045549) ("the '549 reference"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 4, the only independent claim facing rejection at this time, claims a process for controlling the speed of a traveling block of a well workover rig. This process first determines the speed of the traveling block, the position of the traveling block, and the weight supported by the traveling block. The speed of the traveling block is compared to a maximum speed value so as to maintain the speed at or below the maximum speed value. The maximum speed value, as claimed, is determined as a function of the weight on the traveling block. As described in the present application between page 8, line 4, and page 9 line 5, the maximum velocity can vary as a

function of the weight or momentum of the traveling block, and is calculated using an algebraic equation or is determined by reference to a weight/velocity chart.

In contrast, the '017 reference controls the speed of the traveling block by comparing that speed to a stored parameter. In fact, the '017 reference specifically cites that "the preselected limits of speed ... are unalterably set for a particular size and type of oil well drilling apparatus at the owner's discretion." '017 reference at col. 7, ll. 50-57. This expressly discloses that the speed limit for the '017 oil well drilling apparatus is preset, and cannot be changed. Nowhere in the '017 reference is it disclosed that the speed limit varies as a function of the weight carried by the traveling block, a point that was recognized by the Examiner in the office action. In fact, as described above, the '017 reference actually states that the limit is "unalterably set" for a given apparatus.

Weight is monitored in the '017 reference simply to determine the distance required to slow down the traveling block, and to determine if a predetermined maximum hook load is exceeded. '017 reference at col. 9, ll. 27-44. There is no disclosure in the '017 reference that the monitored weight directly affects the speed limit programmed into the '017 apparatus. This limitation of claim 4 is also not disclosed by the '549 reference.

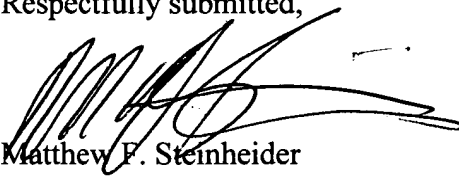
The '549 reference discloses in paragraph 0070, at page 4, a means for a "user to select the approximate weight or mass of the load 30 attached to the cable 28." (emphasis added). As described, and shown in Figure 5 of the '549 reference, the hoist user selects "light 56, medium 58 and heavy 60 loads" as inputs into the load selector 52. This is not what is claimed in the present application. Independent Claim 4 expressly claims that the maximum velocity value is **determined** as a function of weight on the traveling block. As described in the application, such

determination is made by calculating the maximum velocity value using an algebraic equation, or by looking up the maximum velocity in a velocity v. weight chart. No such "determination" is made in the '549 reference. Instead, an operator merely "approximates" the weight on the hook, and manually enters in one of three preset values: light, medium, or heavy. This is much different than the presently claimed system in which the maximum value is automatically determined.

In view of the above, claims 4-16 are respectfully submitted as being clearly distinct and patentable over the art of record and therefore Applicant respectfully requests their entry and allowance by the Examiner. Applicant believes the application will then be in position for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at 713-787-1516, or by email at steinheiderm@howrey.com with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,



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